

OBSERVATIONS

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ON THE

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Writings

OF THE

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CRAFTSMAN.



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GERMAN WATSON'S

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I AM not ignorant of the unequal Terms, upon which he enters the Lists in a Paper-War, who draws his Pen on the Defensive Side ; those, who engage the Malice of Mankind to their Party, will generally, I fear, lead more numerous Troops, and find much better Encouragement than

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those,

those, who sollicit their good Nature, or appeal to their Justice.

FOR, as most Men have Passions, whilst few are blessed with Understandings; and that there are many more, who are ready to sneer, than are capable to judge, or willing to acquit; so the Glare of a declamatory Invec-tive, tho' never so ill founded, will dazzle much greater Numbers, than the clearest Reasoning, and most con-clusive Arguments will ever enlighten.

BUT notwithstanding the Disadvan-tages, which from the Imperfection of human Kind; they sometimes labour under, who undertake the juster Cause; as I flatter my self, that on some Oc-casions, the Honesty of our Minds may recoil against this Propensity to Satyr, and that what is too general, is not universal; since I imagine there are Cases, where People may be more shock'd at the Morals of a Satyrist, than pleased with his Wit, and will not suffer the Depravity of their Na-tures to be flattered at the Expence of
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their Principles ; I shall not be deter'd, by the Discouragements I have enumerated, nor the Fear of incurring that Ridicule, which often attends being serious, from entering into a short Examination of the original Design, Progress, and Effects, of the Writings of the *Craftsman*, who seems of late, under the Shelter of the Law, and an Affectation of telling bold Truths, to have usurped a Right of circulating guarded Treasons, and weekly Falshoods, throughout the whole Kingdom.

HE has, by a Sort of Papal Authority, taken upon him to cite, expound and comment upon our *English* History, as dogmatically, as unfairly, and often as ignorantly, as his Holiness himself ever did on the Scriptures ; he perverts Characters and Meanings, as the other does Texts and Doctrines, and like him, when he does not find the Originals apposite to his Purpose, his Invention supplies his Learning, and he makes them so.

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BUT unless he could contrive, that the Reading of our Historians should be prohibited to his Followers, as that of the Gospel is to the Pope's, his Frauds may chance to be detected, the Sect of *Jansenists* to his Doctrine encrease, and Mr. *Danvers's* Bulls not received with that implicit Faith, and blind Submission, which is paid to those of *Rome*.

To point out the Rancour, the Acrimony, and Virulence with which all his Productions are fraught, would be an unnecessary, and tedious Task; it would be tedious, as every Paper, and almost every Paragraph, he has written, might be quoted as so many accumulated Proofs; and it would be unnecessary, because such Proofs, tho' they would cast a Reflection upon him, would not wipe off those he has endeavoured to cast upon others.

FOR as the Brutality of an Executioner does not prove the Innocence of him who suffers; so it is possible for a Criminal to deserve his Punishment, tho'

tho' one abhors the Hand that seems to take a Pleasure in inflicting it.

My Design therefore is, to shew the Falshood of these Authors Indictments, and the Unfairness of their Prosecutions ; to consider the Allegations, without entering into the Characters of those who advance them, and without expatiating on the trite Topicks of the Despair, and Profligacy of some of the Fraternity ; the Envy, Ambition, and Disappointment of others ; and the want of Temper, Candour and Judgment in all ; I shall cursorily run through the Steps of their Performances, and as Circumstances occur, occasionally in some few Instances observe, how far their Assertions tally with Truth, their Quotations with History, their Conduct with their Professions, and even their Writings with Themselves.

WHEN first this meritorious and laudable Work was undertaken, many pompous Professions were made to the World, and many specious Pleas were
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brought for setting it on Foot ; private Views wore the Mask of publick Good ; Ambition cloathed itself in Popularity ; the Spirit of Resentment took the Title of the Spirit of Liberty ; and the Welfare of the Nation, and Loyalty to the King, were made the plausible Pretences for throwing amongst his People the Seeds of Clamour against his Ministers, and his Measures ; for preaching Sedition, and endeavouring to infuse Discontent into the Hearts of all his Subjects.

FOR a little while indeed all the Arrows in the *Craftsman's* Quiver, seemed directed solely at one Mark ; they were levell'd at a Minister, whom one of this Club (one whose Prudence was never reckon'd by his best Friends his principal Virtue) was so unguarded, in his Enmity to declare, *he would pursue to his Destruction* ; he publicly swore his Ruin ; but tho' he bound himself under this Curse, Providence has so ordain'd, that had he not eat nor drank till he had compleated it
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and slain *Paul*, he must long ago have been starved.

HOWEVER the whole Stream of their Malice, for some Time, flowed only in this Channel, to vilify this Minister's Name, to arraign his Conduct, depreciate his Services, blacken his Character, and weaken his Credit, both with his Prince and his Fellow-Subjects ; all Hands were imployed, and all Engines set at Work ; Manuscripts were circulated, the Press loaded, Coffee-House Talkers, Table-Wits, and Bottle-Companions had their Instructions given them ; and the grossest Falshoods were inculcated in the grossest Terms ; the sacred Correspondences in former Friendships were perverted, the Secrets disclosed, and all the Laws of Nature, Custom, Principle, Morality and Society trampled on, and broken.

WHEN the Sources of their Invention grew dry, Libraries were ransack'd, the Annals of all Ages were turned over, and Extracts made, out

of the worst Characters, that the Historians, or *Calebs*, of other Times ever transmitted to Posterity, to be applied to these.

The *Sejanus's* and *Wolfey's* of former Ages, the *Menzikof's* and *Coscia's* of later Dates, were described in their blackest Colours ; and Parallels were drawn between Persons and Characters, where no Similitude or Affinity could ever have been found, if the Records of other Ages had not been copied by the Slander of this.

WHEN they found the Words of the Authors they referr'd to not strong enough, the Weight of their own was added, and convey'd in borrowed Names : *Italicks* pointing out the favourite Passages, and the Coinage of Moderns comma'd on the Side, was often inserted, like Quotations from the Ancients, for whole Paragraphs together.

BUT the Man, whom the Madnefs of their Inveteracy in so indecent a Manner,

Manner, continued to pelt with this Series of Ribaldry, being as much Superior to his Antagonists in Temper, as in Judgment, coolly stood the successive Shocks of their wasted Fire; equally invulnerable in his Quiet, and in his Character.

He contemned Accusations, which his own Conscience did not second; nor took *the Voice of his Enemies for the Voice of the People*; He considered all their Clamour, as the natural Effects of Competition, and Disappointment; and look'd upon this Tryal of his Patience, as the Tax every Minister must pay for Royal Favours; since Envy will always paint those most black, whom Princes most distinguish, as surely as the Shadows of those will always seem deepest, on whom the Sun shines the brightest.

BUT when this Scent became so cold, that political Sportsmen grew weary of following a Pack of Animals, who were always barking at a Prey they could not Wound, and following
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what they could not overtake ; and that these Writers had rung the Changes on the Words, *Corruption, Bribery, Male-Administration, Oppression and Injustice*, till People were so habituated to the *Vox et præterea nihil*, that the Peal laid those to sleep, whom the Ringers propos'd it should alarm ; they began to find that other Forces must be drawn out, new Batteries form'd, and new Places attack'd.

HOWEVER I must observe here, that during their Chace after this Minister, they had from Time to Time made great Professions to the Prince he serv'd, of their Loyalty to his Government, and Affection to his Person ; tho' they were at the same Moment exclaiming against every Step of his Measures, and every Action of his Reign.

How they propos'd His Majesty should reconcile these general Professions, with such particular Reflexions, I know not ; but I should think the Alternative, they gave him, of being unjust enough to abett the flagrant Iniquities

quities they complain'd of, or blind enough not to perceive them, was one, which neither he, nor any one who has the Honour to know him, would look upon, as any very great Compliment, either to his Head, or his Heart.

AND if there were any lengths of Absurdity, to which the Vanity of human Nature could not carry some of those, in whose Composition it presides the strongest, one would wonder, how a Set of Writers could hope to have Art enough to succeed in flattering a Prince, whose Understandings had already miscarried in the low Endeavours of cajoling a Mob.

BUT as the Idle, the Profligate, and the Desperate have Time enough to spare, no Characters to lose, and no worse Situation to fear; so these Gentlemen knew, whatever Project they engaged in, provided they escaped Hanging, (and even that Danger some of them perhaps may possibly be inured to) they could be no great Sufferers by the Miscarriage,

carriage ; and should remain, but where they were.

PURSUANT therefore to the Scheme of trying what could be done by Flattery, they were perpetually declaring themselves not Jacobites, but Patriots ; they gave up *Fog* for such ; but at the same Time, that they were treading in his Steps, talking in his Style, and fighting under his Banner, they professed an Abhorrence to his Cause : As if the whole World must not perceive, that their only Option was owning themselves Knaves enough to be Confederates in it, or weak enough to be the Tools of it.

HOWEVER they abjured *Fog's* Appellation, and stuck to their own ; so that this Sect of Patriots was to Jacobites, what Socinians were to Arians, and Pironists to Scepticks ; they preach'd the same Doctrine, and held the same Tenets, but took a different Name, and endeavoured, by the subtle Sophistry of Words, logically to prove a Distinction, where there was essentially no Difference.

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UNDER this affected Title, and with such shallow Artifices, they labour'd to convince the King of the Attachment they had to his Person, whilst they were railing at his Government ; and of the Zeal they had for Him, whilst they were obstructing all his Measures.

NOR did they ever slip any Occasion to assure him, how possible it was, without the least leaning to the Pretender, to act constantly in concert with his Agents ; and without any Tincture of Republican Principles, to be always inveighing against the Dangers and Inconveniencies of the most limited Monarchy.

AT length finding these Absurdities and Contradictions too gross to pass, and all their ingratiating Schemes abortive, they grew weary of the Constraint of speaking a Language so foreign to their Hearts ; and resolved at once to throw both the Mask and Scabbard aside, to temporize no longer,

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but openly to attack even that sacred Person, which hitherto they had only dared obliquely to touch, and collaterally to glance at.

THE Transition was easy from Ministers to Princes ; and the same Methods that had served to defame the one, were now imployed to depreciate the other. The whole Artillery of Pamphleteers, Ballad-mongers, and Libellers was drawn out ; they recurr'd again to History for Parallels, they quoted Tyrants in Italicks, shew'd by what Steps Revolutions might be form'd ; and resolved, since they could not prevail on the King to change his Ministry, to try if they could not persuade the People to change their King.

A PRINCE, whose personal Courage has been so often prov'd, whose Justice was never call'd in Question, and whose Abilities are equal to his Application, was often hinted at by these loyal and worthy Gentlemen, in Suggestions, which

which any other Author must share their Crime, to be able to repeat without blushing.

HE has been described as a Prince who delighted only in Troops and Taxes; tho' every Action of his Reign demonstrates, what his every Declaration from the Throne has profess'd, that his constant and steady Aim, is the Ease and Peace of his Subjects, in the Reduction of both.

If train'd in Camps, and expos'd in the Confederate Armies and common Cause of Europe, the Glory of his earlier Years was Bravery and Success in War; how naturally might the Fame he acquired by his Sword, have bias'd his Mind to that noble Imperfection of the greatest Souls, the Love of exercising it.

BUT if the secret Inclinations of his Heart, did rather lean towards the Scenes of Action, than the Paths of Quiet; and that he was more delighted

with a Military than a Civil Fame (tho' with equal Abilities to acquire either) what Obligations must that People have to him, of whom he chose rather to be the Guardian than the Leader? whose Welfare he preferr'd to his own Passions, and for whom, declining all the dazzling Trophies of Conquest for himself, he has been constantly endeavouring, with a juster Pride, to procure all the national Advantages of Peace?

WHENEVER he has been cross'd or retarded in this Pursuit, with what Industry have these Authors ascribed all the natural Ebbs and Flows of the Power and Interests of Europe, and the necessary Vicissitudes and Fluctuations of human Affairs, to Errors and Defects in the Councils of *Great-Britain*.

THEY have as ignorantly as unfairly spoken of foreign Transactions, like domestick Measures: As if Treaties could be made like Acts of Parliament, and the same Advantages procured to any one State at a Congress, where all Nations

Nations are laying in their different Claims, and mutually to be considered ; as in a Senate, where the Welfare of one People only is to be regarded, and the distinct Interest of each Particular makes the joint Interest of the whole Body.

WITH what Clamour have they inculcated the Decline of our Credit, and the Decay of our Trade ; whilst it is demonstrably true, notwithstanding the Reduction of the national Interest for Money, that the one is at this Moment at as high a Mark, as ever it was known to stand ; nor is it less sure, that the Suspension of the other, as it was unavoidably owing to the late Commotions in Europe, so must its Revival be the certain, tho' gradual Consequence of the Treaty of *Seville*, and those Commotions subsiding.

WITH the same Industry, and the same Justice, have they suggested the Sacrifice the King is always ready to make

make of the Interest of his *English* to his foreign Dominions: Few Words are sufficient to the reasonable and the candid, to obviate that Aspersions; and with the weak and the factious, who is idle enough to expostulate? When the King had his Option of Peace with the Emperour, or Peace with *Spain*, which was the Interest of *Hanover*, and which was the Interest of *Great Britain*? Which did he reject, and which did he chuse? Which Power did he defy, and which did he care for?

ANOTHER fashionable Topick in their Philipicks has been the *Corruption* of the Times: This Word has been bandied about with such strong *Innuendos* and round Assertions, (for Examples and Proofs are never the Tools these Gentlemen work with) that some have been weak enough to doubt, whether there may not have been some Shadow of Truth, in what I take to be so utterly false, that I believe I may venture to say, this is almost the only Court, the only Reign, in which no
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one single Instance was ever pretended to be given, of Solicitation made, or Favour shewn, by the Force of Money.

BUT had all these Representations they have made of the Decline, Contempt, and Corruption of our Situation been faithful Reports, where must the Odium have fallen but on the Head of our State. Were he a slothful, an ignorant or an indolent Prince, others might have incurr'd it ; but as few are so ill inform'd, as not to know, from the minutest to the most material Transactions, both at Home and Abroad, that all who have the Honour to serve him, are rather his Agents than his Deputies, that they are the Ministers of his Dictates, and not the Executers of their own Projects ; since I say every Thing is known to pass thro' that Centre, had their Insinuations been true, they knew the Demerit would have been only his, who now enjoys all the Honour of their being false.

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NOR has the indefatigable Affiduity of *Mr. Danvers* for the Service of his Majesty, confined itself meerly to the Advancement of his Honour as a King ; but with equal good Will extended it self, even to the Care of his domestick Happiness.

IN this View (for in what other could it be ?) he has, with a Morality not inferior to his Loyalty, not only dared to insult the Majesty of the best Queen, but endeavour'd to cast a Shade over the Virtues of the best Woman.

ONE not less amiable in every private Walk of Life, than perfect in her publick Station ; for as in the latter her Liberality so many have proved, her Affability all partake, and her universal Benevolence on every Occurrence is shown ; so in the other, what Examples can be given, in any Rank of Life, of a better Wife, a better Mother, a better Mistress, or a better Friend ?

If these Appellations seem too familiar, I hope I shall be forgiven the Use of them, since she, to whom they are applied, seems more solicitous to acquire, and prouder to deserve them; than any others Ambition can covet, or Fortune can bestow.

FOR as she is sensible, that the one, Merit only can possess; whilst the rest are daily obtain'd by the Accident of Birth or Advantages of Alliance; so she prefers those Titles, which she can only enjoy in common with the Virtuous, to all those less valuable Distinctions, which with Diadems, and Purple, she might wear in common with the Vicious.

NOR can the *Craftsman* boast a greater Fidelity to History on her Chapter, than on most others; for in speaking of *Edward* the Fourth's Queen, that Particular excepted of the best Employments being ingross'd by her Relations, to which not the least Sha-

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dow of a Parallel can be pretended in this Reign; his Report of the dead is little juster than his Suggestions of the living; he hardly asperges the Memory of the one, less than in falsifying the Character of the other. But as none are blind enough to mistake from what Motives he transgresses the Laws of Truth upon this Occasion; so no Body, I fancy, will be much puzzled to determine, which Queen is most obliged to him.

BUT what Effect can these Authors flatter themselves such Papers can produce? Do they imagine the gradual Esteem and Reverence for her Character, built on an Experience of so many Years, can be overturn'd by the manifest Injustice and Malice of one Libel? Or, do they mean to insinuate, that Kings, like Hermits, are to be excluded all Society, and deprived of those Blessings which the meanest of their Subjects may enjoy?

CAN a reasonable, or a social Mind imagine human Nature capable of greater Felicity, than a Commerce contracted by Inclination, strengthened by Esteem, and rivetted by Habit? If there is none superior, and that being a Prince is to debar the Enjoyment of it, I know not whether it be true what *Cato* says of the Post of Honour, but I am sure the Post of Happiness must be a private Station.

ON the other Side, If this Happiness be not less compatible with Grandeur, than with Obscurity; and that the Importance of a King's Secrets, should only make him more cautious where they are confided; to whom can they with less Danger be communicated, where with more Safety deposited, than in the Breast of one, whose Interest by Situation must be his own, and whose whole Life has been one uninterrupted Series of Proofs, that she has no Pleasure but the procuring his, no Choice but his Will.

HIS Honour is her's, his Safety is her's, and his Prosperity is her's; and if it were possible for her to taste of Happiness after the Loss of that she enjoys in him, where could she turn her Eyes to find it, but in the Prospect of his Crown safely transmitted to the joint Monument of their Affection, his and her Posterity?

WITH what Views then could these Authors, as ignorantly with Regard to past Times, as fruitlessly with Regard to the present, coin the absurd Assertion, of the Downfall of the House of *York* being the Effect of the Conduct of *Edward* the Fourth's Queen? I can conceive no other Motive for it, than the short-lived chimerical Pleasure it gave them, to prophecy Ruin to a Family, from which as they have never deserv'd, they never expect any Favour.

Do these Suggestions then spring from a *Spirit of Liberty*? or are they merely the Overflowings of the Spirit

rit of Faction? *Mr. Danvers* says, they never subsist together. *Quam temere in nosmet leges sancimus iniquas?* For if this Position be true, how little of the Spirit of Liberty can there be at any Time in the Conduct of those, who were often so evidently actuated by the Prejudices of the other.

I OWN it unfair to turn this Maxim upon him; since in chiming upon these two Phrases, he hardly oftener asserts their being incompatible, than he gives Instances of their not being so.

ONE Proof (besides many others I could produce) of His Examples jarring with this Maxim, is his saying in the *Craftsman* of *October* the 3d, that in the Contentions of the *Yorkists* and *Lancastrians*, *Tho' each Side contended to have a King of their own, neither Party would have a Tyrant; they sacrificed their Lives to Faction, but would not give up their Liberties;* This sure demonstrates, that the Spirit
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of Faction did reign, even among these Champions for Liberty ; and much plainer, I believe, than the *Craftsman* can prove, that the Spirit of Liberty ever moves his Engines of Faction.

I should grow very tedious if in this Paper I should launch into a farther Disquisition of all the contradictory Rodomontades I could point out in his Performances ; I shall therefore conclude with saying, That be his Hopes never so sanguine, his Prophecies never so strong, his Writings never so inflammatory, and his Endeavours never so indefatigable ; Whether *HENRY* was merely *a Creature of the People* or not ; whether they were Losers by his bad Qualities, or Gainers by his great ones ; Whether *Edward* the Fourth's Queen was so great and able a Woman, as *Rapin* describes her, or so short-sighted an Intriguer as Mr. *Danvers* represents her ; Whether *new Kings* are always agreeable to a Nation or not ; and whether *Caleb* and *Fog*, or their Directors or Emissaries, have a distinct
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or united Aim ; I do firmly believe, that the Peace and Happiness of *England* are too deeply rooted in *the present House of York*, for the Nation ever to be mad enough at the Instigations of the *Craftsman*, to risque the transplanting them into *his House of Lancaster*.

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